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AUTHOR Beckus, Leonard; Dasho, Stefan J.
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ABSTRACT

Through a reexamination of the information collected by two previous studies, this study looked at the role of administrators in desegregating the two school districts observed. Information came from inschool observations and interviews with teachers, principals, and district officials. The findings of the study consist of summaries of the district administrators' perceptions of problems relating to desegregation and a list of conclusions about the shortcomings of administrative decision-making. Problems that administrators perceived when desegregating schools were related to lack of school funds, community relations, planning, communication within the school district, superintendent leadership, and inservice training. Failures of administrative decision-making to truly eliminate racial isolation arose from lack of sufficient planning, emphasis on legal rather than true compliance, magnet programs that offered no real innovations, lack of cultural pluralism in the curriculum, and lack of leadership from principals.

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Multi- Ethnic School Environments

MANAGING SOCIAL CHANGE:

ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION-MAKING
IN DESEGREGATING SCHOOLS

Leonard C. Beckum Stefan J. Dasho

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ABSTRACT

In an ethnographic study of training needs of teachers in newly desegregated schools conducted by the Multi-Ethnic School Environments Project, the impact of administrative policies and decisions was in evidence in each classroom studied, often in ways unanticipated by the district. Administrators' perceptions of problems, needs, and strategies were identified and compared to the teachers' perceptions and program implementation results.

The study addressed critical issues relating to administrative policy and practice, such as attitudes toward change, constraints on decision making, and the impact of the district and site administrators' leadership on overall implementation of pluralistic education.

I. Introduction

Much is currently known about the characteristic patterns of organizational change and the adoption of innovations in public education. Many leading organizational change researchers (e.g., March, Weick, and Ansoff) argue that most change does not occur in predictable and rational ways as planners and management textbooks would hope. Mediating factors include the perceived style and expectations within the institution (Hershey and Blanchard, 1977), the need for multiple tools of change, and the changing focus of the organization over time (Peters, 1978). The opacity of conditions within which educational innovation must be steered results in the relative lack of control of implementation among school boards and superintendents (Mitchell, 1980). School districts qua organizations are classic instances of loose coupling--i.e. the component parts function in a highly autonomous fashion (Weik, 1976). The many purely organizational impediments to change within school districts are exacerbated by currents in the educational arena such as finance problems, decreasing public confidence, increasing public accountability, increasing legislative restrictions, demographic shifts and pedagogical fadism. Thus, the success of school desegregation, independent of the public controversy which surrounds it, is like other innovations, subject to the inertia of organizations in adopting change. Significantly, the literature is replete with caveats that the successful implementation of desegregation requires both individual staff and institutional change in the district (Mack, 1968; Goldhammer, 1969; Cuban, 1972; Caughey, 1973; Kirby et al., 1973; Holden, 1974).

The role of the administrators in managing the implementation of desegregation policy could best be examined by following, in situ, decision-making processes and mapping the rationales, communication patterns, and perceived

constraints of the staff. Alternatively, this paper examines the consequences of two specific organizational change efforts. The vantage point of the classroom affords the opportunity to describe what these institutional operations have produced--both in terms of the climate of the organization and the quality of the effort to encourage social integration. Drawing upon the case studies of magnet programs produced for the Multi-Ethnic School Environments Project, poignant connections can be drawn between differing contexts and their educational results.

II. Research Design

a. Purpose of the Study

The Multi-Ethnic School Environments Project is funded at the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development by the National Institute of Education to document the kinds of inservice training needed by teachers in newly desegregated or multiethnic schools. The long-range goal of the Project is the design of training processes for inservice education which can be implemented by districts' staff development departments, or by faculty at a school site. As a research base for the development of such training, two ethnographic studies have been conducted in school districts undergoing their first year of voluntary desegregation. A complete discussion of the research design of the first study is found in Beckum and Dasho (1979), and of the second study in Beckum and Dasho (1981) and will not be detailed here. The first study, in Valley City (pseudonym), was an exploratory study which used a multidisciplinary approach to analysis. Data analysts representing the perspectives of educational psychology, sociology, social psychology, and administration each produced reports which examined key issues related to teacher effectiveness and educational equity. These topics were moral socialization, socioemotional development of students, teacher planning and administrative issues. Comparative conclusions were drawn about the kinds of problems teachers faced, and the effects of the strategies they used to address these problems and the goal of reducing social distance and encouraging social integration among students. In order to test the validity of the implications about teacher training needs which were drawn from the exploratory study, a second study was undertaken in another school district, Vista Grande (pseudonym), which also was beginning the first year of voluntary desegregation. It was assumed that

the differences between the environments, teacher styles, and mixes of students would allow us to refine and expand our understanding of the factors influencing the success of teachers in dealing with the challenges of pluralistic classrooms.

While the two studies were classroom-centered, the impact of the administrative decision-making and the institutional climate of the district during desegregation was felt in the classrooms. The purpose of this paper, then, is to examine the role of administration in the process of desegregating the school districts we observed, and to generalize from this information the problems of organizational change in the current socio-political context.

While in-depth characterization of the decision-making processes involved in the operation of administrative operations is not possible, this paper will attempt to outline some of the experiences of administrators, as well as the concrete consequences of action (or inaction) in planning and implementation of new desegregation plans. Policy salients can be identified which bear on the questions of the trouble-freeness of plan implementation, as well as the recurring areas in which remediation is needed to guarantee the spirit as well as the letter of the law in the interest of equal educational opportunity.

b. Data Sources

Data for this discussion of administrative issues was drawn from multiple information sources including ethnographic field notes, and interviews with teachers, principals and district officials.

The ethnographers assigned to classrooms in each of the studies were assigned to focus primarily on teacher-student and student-student interactions. Nevertheless, information about the school context was an important element of data collection. Incidents in the day-to-day operation of the schools over the six weeks of the data collection period provided insight into the degree of preparedness of the magnet programs to deal with the implementation of desegregation, the role of the site administrator, the morale of the faculty and staff, the communication with the central administration, and the degree of involvement of the community. During initial interviews, teachers were asked about their experiences with the principal, the amount and kind of inservice training received from the district, and their attitude toward the district administration. Principals were interviewed concerning their attitudes toward desegregation, their feelings about the school and the factors affecting the potential success of the magnet programs, and their general feelings about education in the district.

The person(s) in each district responsible for administering the desegregation program (i.e. ESAA coordinator in Valley City; the Deputy Administrator for Desegregation and Integration as well as the Director of Public Relations in Vista Grande) were interviewed to discuss a variety of issues related to the planning and implementation of the first year of desegregation. The interview schedule is included as Appendix A.

III. Description of the Communities, School Districts and the Desegregation Plans

a. Description of Valley City School District

Valley City School District, one of the fifteen largest districts in California, is located in an urban and surrounding unincorporated suburban and rural area with a population just over 100,000. The district serves approximately 30,000 K-12 grade students who live in the community. Highly ghettoized residential segregation exists for both blacks, living on the west side of town, and Mexican-Americans, living on the southeast side of town. Freeways provide natural barriers to these areas. The elementary school population in 1978* consisted of 52 percent white, 28 percent Spanish-surnamed, and 16 percent black students. Comparison of ethnic distribution surveys from 1974 and 1978 shows that the Spanish-surnamed student population increased by five percent, the black population increased by one percent, while the white student population decreased by seven percent. The 1970 census figures indicate substantial poverty in the community. Approximately 13 percent of the families were below the poverty line, and almost half of the adult population had not completed high school. Twenty-five percent of the elementary students were from welfare homes.

b. History of Desegregation in Valley City

Desegregation was strongly resisted by the white community when the district attempted integration in the early 1960's. Following a suit initiated by the NAACP in 1973, the district was ordered by the State Superior Court to present a plan to eliminate racial isolation in its schools. On May 1, 1978,

* All figures are drawn from documents prepared by the school district.

the judge noted that significant improvement in educational conditions had occurred from 1973 to 1978, and that the number of isolated minorities had been reduced from 6,600 to 2,000 students. In light of this evidence, the court accepted the district's proposed voluntary desegregation plan. The court would impose a mandatory program if the voluntary plan failed to meet its goal by November 20, 1979. The goal was to have no ethnic group compose more than 80 percent of the student population of any school. The district was successful in reaching this goal and deadline.

The district's plan for addressing minority isolation in its 37 elementary schools consisted of creating cluster arrangements for the sixteen impacted schools in order to encourage students to transfer for one or more years. Four clusters were designated such that within each cluster the total student population was approximately balanced between minority and white students. The bait for student transfers within each cluster was the magnet programs in basic skills, early childhood education, fine arts, environmental education, science-history, Vanguard (MGM), extended daycare and year-round education. Eligibility for programs was restricted or apportioned to white or minority students in a cluster, based upon the needs of the particular school housing the program. Thus, a white student attending a predominantly white school in a cluster was eligible for the extended daycare program at one of the cluster's black schools.

Classrooms observed (in this study) were drawn from schools in three of the four clusters in the district. To provide an overview of relative isolation problems in these cluster schools, the ethnic distribution of students in each school, as of September 1978, is shown below.

<u>School</u>	<u>% Minority</u>	<u>% Majority</u>
Cluster I		
Van de Camp	79	21
I-b	25	75
I-c	88	12
Cluster II		
II-a	25	75
II-b	33	67
II-c	90	10
Cluster III		
Hooper	20	80
La Cumbre	94	6
III-c	27	73
III-d	84	16
Cluster IV		
Jefferson	80	20
IV-b	38	62
IV-c	27	73
IV-d	73	27
IV-e	34	66

In addition to being isolated, minority students performed more poorly than whites on standardized tests. As indicated in the district's ESAA proposal, 80.5 percent of the sixth-grade students in minority schools in the clusters scored below the sixth-grade equivalent in reading on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) in January 1979. By contrast, 46.7 percent of the sixth-grade students in majority schools scored below their grade level. These trends were reflected in the sixth-grade reading scores at each of the target schools.

	<u>% of students below grade equivalent (50th percentile)</u>
La Cumbre	75
Jefferson	91
Hooper (predominantly majority)	57
Van de Camp	80

The district's ESAA program tried to address deficiencies identified by a comprehensive needs assessment. Its efforts included: placing resource teachers, counselors, and "diagnosis and prescriptive evaluation centers" in each of the cluster schools; purchasing curriculum appropriate to integrated classrooms; establishing outreach programs; and designing inservice training programs for teachers and aides.

Of the 774 students participating in cluster transfers at the beginning of the 1978-79 school year, 89 were at the schools studied. These numbers had increased somewhat by the time observations began in mid-October.

c. Description of Vista Grande School District

Vista Grande School District is located in a large California city which is splintered into several school districts. The district serves approximately 18,000 K-6 students (1979 figures). Residential segregation exists in the downtown area which is predominantly Mexican-American and increasingly Vietnamese, and in the suburban valley which is overwhelmingly upper-middle-class white. Other parts of the district are more racially mixed. The elementary school population was 62 percent white, 30 percent Hispanic, six percent Asian, two percent black and less than one percent Native-American. More recent trends indicate that the proportion of Asians is increasing significantly, as is the Hispanic population to a lesser degree, while the percentage of whites has declined accordingly. The social strata of families in the community ranges from upper-middle-class to recent poor immigrants from Vietnam and Mexico.

d. History of Desegregation in Vista Grande

The advent of school desegregation was avoided successfully through the courts for several years. The original suit was brought to the courts ten years ago but a decision was not handed down until 1976. At that time the funding of de facto segregation absolved the district of blame. When the State Supreme Court ruled that all districts must attempt to alleviate school segregation, whether de facto or de jure, the district began taking steps to prepare for voluntary desegregation. In 1979, the district missed the deadline set by the State Board of Education for all district to submit desegregation plans, and failed to get the Circuit Court to rehear the case after they failed in a bid to get ESAA funds for a magnet school program. In 1980, they were cited by the Office of Civil Rights for failing to comply with bilingual education requirements, which resulted in emergency funds for setting up magnet programs being denied.

Finally, in the fall of 1980, a limited voluntary desegregation plan went into effect. Between 1978 and 1980 racial isolation increased at 10 of the 14 schools which were considered segregated (i.e., greater than 80/20 balance). The limited plan consisted of the creation of two back-to-basics magnet schools located in predominantly white schools, and two Extended Learning Program (gifted) mini-magnets, one of which was located in a predominantly white suburban school and the other in a predominantly minority downtown school. The district's goal of having these programs redress the racial imbalance at these schools was dealt a severe blow by the teachers' strike which resulted in fewer student transfers than had been anticipated. At one of the back-to-basics schools, for example, only nine minority students volunteered to be part of the program as of November, although a few more have since been recruited. Pairing and cluster arrangement were originally planned but were not implemented.

Classrooms observed in the study were drawn from one school of each of the two types of programs. Percentages of ethnic distribution of students at these schools are given on page 12 in Figure I for 1979, although the minority population as of the 1980 school year for Whitman were closer to 40 percent Asian and 40 percent Hispanic.

While figures on the level of academic achievement have not yet been released to the project, the language difficulties of ES students at Whitman School would suggest that there would be a high percentage of students who were scoring below grade level. This condition would not, of course, obtain in the ELP program since these students are gifted or high achieving students.

At the back-to-basics magnet (Shepherd), the principal indicated that the school had a proud tradition of having test scores above the district average.

All teachers observed in Vista Grande are white. This is because all teachers in the ELP mini-magnet and in Shepherd School are white women. This reflects the general condition of the district as a whole, in which 77.4 percent of the 734 elementary teachers are white, and 67.6 percent are white women.

FIGURE I

SCHOOL	Amer. Ind.	Asian/ Pac. Isl.	Hispanic	Black	White	TOTAL	
						Nos.	Min./White%
* 1	2/0%	39/5%	83/11%	41/6%	557/77%	722	23/77
2	0/0	11/2	77/13	18/3	489/82	595	18/82
3	4/1	40/6	488/69	23/3	155/22	710	78/22
* 4	0/0	12/3	43/10	3/1	384/87	442	13/87
5	2/0	29/7	24/6	3/1	371/86	429	14/86
6	0/0	6/2	138/47	4/1	148/50	296	50/50
7	1/0	12/5	72/33	9/4	127/57	221	43/57
8	0/0	44/8	46/8	7/1	445/82	542	18/82
* SHEPHERD	3/1	12/3	63/19	5/1	252/75	335	25/75
10	1/0	13/3	315/64	9/2	155/31	493	69/31
11	30/7	49/11	251/55	16/3	112/24	458	76/24
12	1/0	23/4	59/11	16/3	456/82	555	18/82
13	7/2	7/2	415/32	9/2	13/3	451	97/3
14	3/0	21/3	505/82	17/3	73/12	619	88/12
15	0/0	44/9	6/1	4/1	436/89	490	11/89
16	0/0	7/4	2/1	0/0	154/94	163	6/94
17	6/1	14/3	33/8	10/2	348/85	411	15/85
18	2/0	20/4	13/3	13/3	462/91	510	9/91
19	4/1	13/2	240/56	5/1	165/39	427	61/39
20	12/3	57/12	52/11	4/1	340/73	465	27/73
21	0/0	31/9	32/9	23/7	254/75	341	25/75
22	3/0	62/8	26/3	3/0	694/88	788	12/88
* WHITMAN	4/1	111/20	275/49	29/5	147/26	566	74/26
24	9/2	31/6	317/66	34/7	87/18	478	82/18
25	0/0	14/6	6/2	6/2	218/89	244	11/89
26	3/1	3/1	437/79	8/1	99/18	550	82/18
27	1/0	24/4	44/8	9/2	484/86	562	14/86
28	0/0	7/2	27/7	9/2	372/90	415	10/90
29	3/1	9/2	190/48	1/0	194/49	397	51/49
30	0/0	19/5	30/8	6/2	310/85	365	15/85
31	0/0	56/9	7/1	5/1	573/89	641	11/89
32	4/1	62/9	49/7	13/2	586/82	714	18/82
33	3/1	16/4	185/44	9/2	207/49	420	51/49
34	1/0	21/5	26/6	4/1	379/88	432	12/88
35	27/3	8/1	735/86	5/0	22/10	857	90/10
36	1/0	53/8	9/1	2/0	559/90	624	10/90
37	2/0	14/3	54/13	3/1	328/82	401	18/82
TOTAL	139	1041	5374	385	11189	18128	38/62

Asterisk indicates schools in the desegregation plan.

Named schools are those observed in the study.

IV. Administrators' perspective on the Design and Implementation of the Desegregation Plans

This section will present the point of view of the administrators with regard to several issues related to the success of desegregation plans as educational innovations. These issues are: school finance, response of the community, planning, communication with the school district, leadership of the superintendent, inservice training of staff, and problem areas.

a. School Finance

The fiscal picture in a school district underpins the level of staff effort and the resources which can be brought to bear on the design and implementation of a plan. The situations in the two districts were quite different and shaped the desegregation effort in important ways.

Valley City. The financial picture in 1978 was bleak, largely because of the impact of Proposition 13. When the judge's ruling was handed down, the district looked to ESAA for assistance and mobilized its most capable staff from different departments to write a strong grant proposal. During the first year most of the grant (\$530k) went into salaries for resource personnel at the magnet sites.

The financial impact of desegregation has been a boon to the district. Since the first year, the ESAA monies have continued to flow into the district (\$2m the last three years). The number of students participating in the program has increased from 750 to 900 to 2100 during those three years.

The district appears to be adequately staffed, in no small part due to the influx of ESAA money. Prior to desegregation, the district had no department of elementary school instruction. At present, only two administrators are assigned to "general program"; the rest are in categorical programs.

A major concern of the district was the potential for "white flight." It was clear to the researchers that the plan definitely emphasized incentives to whites to transfer students to minority schools. Declining enrollment has been avoided in part because of this precaution, but mainly because the Mexican-American and Asian population has increased. There has been an influx of Thai families to the community. Currently the district is losing only 1 percent of its students a year.

Vista Grande. District officials offered a bleak financial picture for the coming year. If there were no salary increases, the district predicts a minimum of a \$1.3m deficit. A worst case scenario, including the passage of pending state spending legislation, would forecast a \$6m deficit, or certain bankruptcy.

Declining enrollment is not the key factor in this financial picture, but contributes indirectly to the problems. The student rolls have decreased by 3.5 percent/year for the past few years. However, this is insufficient to justify school closures which could provide both a fiscal boost, and the consolidation of attendance boundaries in the service of the desegregation effort. An interesting sidelight of the school closure issue is the fact that schools threatened with closure but with community support have been able to hold on by taking on special education classes. Since only 8-12 students are required to justify a classroom, several possible closures have been avoided.

One senses a growing resentment toward the special considerations given to special education needs. Administrative sources agreed that the central administration is understaffed in all departments (particularly the department of instruction, the office of budget and finance, and the superintendent's office) while the special education staff was perceived to be overstaffed.

Because the district was found to be out of compliance by OCR because of the lack of adequate bilingual services, their eligibility for ESAA was delayed. This was originally perceived as an insurmountable obstacle to implementing anything but no-cost magnets. Money was found, however, by the beginning of the school year--\$709k was approved from ESAA, the board allocated \$500k for improvement of the downtown schools (mainly targeted for secondary schools) and the ELP magnet teacher at Whitman School wrote and received a grant of \$90k.

Nevertheless, the uncertainty about funding created problems for the schools. In several cases, materials were on order for the magnet programs but were not available because of insufficient lead time for selecting them. Purchase of social studies texts were delayed for months because of uncertainty over funds which was caused by the continuing fallout of Proposition 13.

The latest development has been a presentation to the board in which it was projected that the magnet programs will have to be operated without transportation.

The Whitman ELP magnet program, if it remains open, is faced with increase of class size from 28 to 31, and the elimination of the three aides and resource teacher. Following the lead of Los Angeles, which is scaling down its desegregation effort, the district seems to feel that they are better off throwing in the towel on voluntary busing. Financial help would be available if mandatory busing is imposed and the issue may be mute in the current wave of judicial setbacks to the desegregation movement.

b. Response of the Community

Because voluntary desegregation plans rely on the good faith and interest of the community, districts become more concerned about public relations. Because of racial segregation and the long histories of resistance in both communities the districts were prepared for a difficult campaign.

Valley City. The reaction of the community was not as problematic as had been anticipated. The mood of the community was described as moving from "hostility" to "support" within the first months of the plan. The number of students who have transferred increased dramatically after the first year. Interest of parents is increasing at the school level to identify useful programs. As a result of these successes the district is not frightened by the possibility of vouchers because they presently offer so many options which tap parents' concerns.

While there were some vocal parents who opposed the plan, there was no organized resistance to the implementation. The media in the community has depicted the program as an unqualified success.

Vista Grande. The reaction of the community was described as "predictably somewhat negative." The district had "dragged its heels" and the community was "brought in kicking and screaming." Magnet schools have been well-accepted, however, they have cautiously been "sold" with little mention of desegregation--a word which seems to inflame the community. A coalition of downtown white parents formed to protest the fact that some white students are not eligible for magnet programs at schools where they would not help racial balance. The media has given this group considerable exposure, while maintaining a generally positive picture of the desegregation effort. The teachers' strike drew a lot of attention away from the initiation of desegregation.

c. Communication Within the District

Although the loose coupling theorists would suggest that change management is a capricious rather than a rational process, the lack of coordination between levels and departments of administration can exert an influence, if only in a negative capacity.

Valley City. The ESAA coordinator felt that there had been a lack of communication between the business, personnel and staff development departments. During the first year of desegregation, this had resulted in slowing down the logistical arrangements for inservice training activities. Since that time the moving and consolidating of the central administration into a new building improved accessibility and, thus, communication among the administrators.

Because of desegregation and the introduction of proficiency testing it was perceived that there was a greater need for site administrators to be in contact with the central office, and that site administrators must have less autonomy. All administrative staff associated with elementary programs attend the regularly scheduled principal meetings. All site administrators must attend the inservice training program being given to their faculties. Evaluation of programs is done by three assistant superintendents so that all are informed about and cannot be protective of the programs and staff. The leadership team of the desegregation program meets weekly with the assistant superintendent to discuss ESAA, support services and transportation. In addition, the superintendent has had a policy of always attending principal meetings.

Vista Grande. In contrast to the Valley City administrators, the degree of communication among departments in Vista Grande was described as "terrible but improving." The district's lame duck superintendent had never attended meetings with principals, and the new superintendent had not improved in this. The transition between the two leaders in the months preceding desegregation had brought a shakeup of personnel. The two administrators most closely in touch with the desegregation planning and the work of the Community Advisory Council were moved to unrelated assignments. The superintendent's staff (the two persons interviewed) consisted of school principals who were moved up into

administrative roles and were learning these roles in the midst of the initial implementation of the desegregation program. While morale was reportedly good, administrators frequently found the new superintendent inaccessible. Decisions affecting the schools were not communicated to the people responsible for implementing them. For example, an idea for creating a program with the county police to decrease truancy was released to the newspapers before the principals had been informed about the idea.

d. Assistance Sought and Provided

While technical assistance is generally advocated as necessary for adequate planning and implementation of desegregation programs, districts tend to seek out financial assistance rather than assistance in program design and evaluation. At the school level, the issue of assistance centers around the request for resources from the district, and the receptivity to assistance provided by the district.

Valley City. The district sought and received financial assistance from ESAA, and The Office of Intergroup Relations of the State Board of Education. The regional Race Desegregation Assistance Center was frequently consulted to sponsor student leadership programs and to examine program evaluation design.

With the influx of ESAA money, inservice training in reading and classroom management was provided to many teachers and all principals in the impacted schools through the education department of local IHEs. No training was provided to prepare teachers for the initial desegregation. Later, inservice training was rearranged under new leadership such that staff development was conducted at the district offices on a voluntary basis with greater commitment from the teachers. The success of the new approach was evinced by the fact that the district now "exports" its expertise to other districts.

As was mentioned earlier, weekly leadership meetings provide a forum for site administrators to request services and share perceptions of needs with the central administration. In sum, the centralization of staff development within the new elementary instruction department was perceived as an opportunity to "flush out" some people who were not ready to move ahead, and to design and provide much needed staff improvement.

Vista Grande. The district received ESAA assistance and the previously mentioned grant for the ELP program. These monies appear to the administrators to be insufficient to stem the continuing cutbacks made necessary by the decaying financial picture. Inservice training has taken a back seat in the desegregation program. The administrators note that "the schools haven't requested it." Whitman School independently made use of a variety of community resources. For example, tutors were sent from the state university and students made field trips there. Prior to the desegregation effort, they had made various contacts with multiculturalists to address the needs of their growing Vietnamese constituency. At another school in the plan, the faculty and parents had joined to write the prospectus for the magnet school, which also served as a source of pride for the community. In general, other than Assertive Discipline training, no inservice effort was deemed desirable to prepare teachers for the implementation of the desegregation plan.

e. Perceived Problems

Valley City. The greatest problem the first year of desegregation was to get sufficient numbers of students to transfer. While some schools had not reached the 80/20 proportion of students by October, this milestone was reached by the Christmas break. Entering the third year of desegregation, the challenge remains to maintain the flexibility of effort to develop programs which will

attract students and drop programs which aren't working. A school closure committee has been formed to examine the need for consolidation. The policies of the new administration in Washington were perceived as potentially threatening to the district's current operations.

Vista Grande. It was felt that a problem remained in educating the community that desegregation was not designed to be "fair" to everyone who wanted educational options, but to accomplish certain goals. Inservice training was contemplated to address the problem of principals protecting students they wanted to remain at their schools. A ten-year plan was in the works to develop specialized schools so that desegregation and cost-effective operations could both be accommodated. Despite these efforts, the district feels that adjusting attendance boundaries, restructuring grade assignments between elementary, junior high and high schools, and school closures must occur although these would not be accomplished without struggle. A particular difficulty was apparent in the continuity of the moving students from elementary to junior high schools. The desegregated downtown school is not a feeder school for the racially isolated junior high, and the expansion of the magnet program to include other schools is not seen to be financially feasible.

f. Administrators' Recommendations to Other Districts

Valley City. Districts must allow lots of planning time (in Valley City from February of the previous school year) prior to implementation. There must be leadership at the board level, and the administration must act proactively rather than responding to situations. The desegregation plan should be viewed as an open process: there must be flexibility to abandon approaches that are not working and generate new approaches. This is where evaluation and staff and community involvement are essential.

Vista Grande. Districts would do well to keep apprised of the various options for programs to reduce racial isolation. Information must not only be sought from outside, but fed down to the principals so that "the light will catch." Lead-in time should be given to staffs and parents in the development of magnet programs so that there is a sense of ownership and problems (such as locating the wrong type of programs at a school) can be avoided. The need for preplanning and continuity of planning for developing situations should be emphasized to avoid operating from crisis to crisis.

V. Administrative Problem Areas in Achieving Integration

Having described administrators' perceptions of the problems they faced in designing desegregation, the discussion now turns to the shortcomings of administrative decision-making in fulfilling the spirit of the law regarding the elimination of racial isolation.

a. Priorities in Planning

The administrators were quite candid in examining the sources of the problems they faced in getting the desegregation program started. Of paramount concern was the orchestration of community involvement in the plan development stage which could be justified as representative of all the constituents of the community yet of a manageable size. The means of "educating" the Desegregation Advisory councils were carefully planned and the paperwork involved both in terms of resources provided and minutes of meetings, proposals, and counter-proposals was formidable in each case.

The administrators only came to consider the need for long-term planning after they recognized the initial plans could float in the hostile sea of community opinion and intransigence to change with the district. The intentions of administrators, it could be claimed with little exaggeration, shifted dramatically once they felt that the initial efforts had "blown over" the resistance of the community and the programs could be "sold" in terms of the improvement of instructional quality, and the increase of choice and opportunity.

A second major concern was the logistical constraints imposed by staffing, student transportation, etc. At the building level, there was a period of several months in which the enrollments of the classes were in need of adjustment. For the teachers, this often meant changing from single-grade to split-grade classrooms or vice versa. The results of these changes varied as the

teachers each had unique positive or negative change as an outcome of the changes.

It can not be overemphasized that while technical assistance agencies and planners constantly harp on the theme of allowing sufficient planning time, the administrators themselves pointed to the importance of preplanning--if only with the wisdom of hindsight. Neither district planned or implemented inservice training for teachers as a systematically designed program of staff preparedness. There were instances in both districts in which teachers did not receive their school assignments until they reported back for duty in the fall.

b. The Numbers Game

The reassignment of students through the creation of attractive specialized school programs (magnets, mini-magnets, extended care programs) tends to be a highly politicized and error-prone undertaking. Administrators tend to be concerned first and foremost with getting sufficient bodies moved so that legal compliance with the court can be assured vis a vis the elimination of racial isolation. Inevitably the school is the unit of analysis when this determination is to be made. Thus, we were witness to the creation of a desegregated school in which the bused white students were not present in the school's regular classes. An additional affront to the goals of desegregation was that the program for majority children was designed to provide academic acceleration as compared to the program offered in the regular classes.

While this represents the most extreme example of prima facie desegregation, the same problem existed at the mini-magnet programs in both districts, where a few minorities were included in the program but where the only contact between students in the program and the rest of the school was for physical

education games which were initiated by the teachers. This problem is inherent in the creation of special programs that require special competencies (e.g., giftedness, artistic skill, etc.). Nevertheless, opportunities for interaction between mini-magnet and other students could be built into the program design. In sum, there are important educational and social inequities which are perpetrated by playing the "numbers game."

c. Minimalist Magnets

Financial woes, lack of planning time, response to the needs of the community--all these reasons are given for designing magnet programs which innovate on paper only. The classic example of this was found in both studies--the back-to-basics magnets. In none of the classrooms observed in three such programs were teachers doing (or asked to do) anything different from their normal practices. A fundamentals program presumably requires no planning or coordination. One school described its suitability for becoming such a program based on the fact that it had self-contained classrooms.

Riding the consumer's concerns for insurance against creeping illiteracy, the instant back-to-basics magnet becomes an attractive "new alternative." No analysis of possible teacher training needs is conducted since it is merely assumed, by administrators and faculty alike, that business-as-usual will prevail.

A second consequence of the choice of back-to-basics orientations is that this would appear to be a further mandate to ignore or reject both cooperative instructional activities and activities designed to promote social integration and improve students' self-esteem, those principles unfortunately dismissed with the humanistic education of the 60's to which the back-to-basics movement is obviously a reaction. This was not apparent in the classrooms of the

exploratory study. In one such instance the teacher was black and dealt with aspects of the blackness of his students. Another teacher set up a program which, in his words, was based on a "transpersonal psychology" approach. By contrast, the situation in Vista Grande was decidedly antithetical to the principles of multicultural education. The faculty voted against receiving training in multicultural education. A 1952 social studies text was in use.

d. Cultural Pluralism as a Material-free Curriculum

Valley City included reference to improving students' attitudes toward self and schooling as goals of its desegregation effort (assessed by questionnaires). Vista Grande did not. After the first year, Valley City also made an effort to look at cross-ethnic friendship and acceptance in its ESAA centers. But in general, cultural pluralism was ignored as a component of the desegregation plans. When teachers chose to include a multicultural objective, this was inevitably (with one laudible exception) translated into the three "F's"--foods, festivals, and famous men. Several teachers did not find the time to observe these concessions to a multicultural perspective. By and large because of the need to do diagnosis and placement in skill subjects, social studies (conceived of as the natural repository for notions of cultural diversity) was not introduced until after the Christmas break. Such curriculum decisions were left to the teacher. There is the danger of administrators including multicultural objectives in their ESAA grant proposals but following up with neither training, mandatory curriculum components nor supervision and evaluation.

There remained in both districts the need for: (1) core curriculum materials reflecting cultural pluralism; (2) special resource materials dealing with issues of understanding cultural differences, the nature of stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes; and (3) the use of planned activities for the development of students' social skills, including communication and conflict resolution.

e. The Role of Site Administrators

The leadership at five of the six schools can be described as ineffectual at best, and destructive at worst. The sole exception was a principal whose school was run as a "tight ship" and was characterized by a high degree of teacher defensiveness toward innovation, and a real unwillingness to acknowledge or recognize the existence of any tension or problems at the school.

A "peter principle" was in evidence in Valley City where principals would be given split duty at two or more schools making supervision virtually impossible. In follow-up interviews with the teachers, conducted after one year, we learned that changes of principals at each of the schools had dramatically changed staff morale. Staff inservice training and greater communication had come about through fresh leadership with only one school assignment.

In Vista Grande, the teachers freely commented about the lack of leadership at one school, and while a deep sense of loyalty existed at the back-to-basics school, the teachers agreed that their principal no longer fought for the school as he used to. Vista Grande principals, to their credit, were visible on their campus and made classroom visits, in contrast to Valley City where they were seldom seen out of their offices.

Interviews with principals generally created the impression that they had pride in their schools and good contact with "downtown" but that there were some insurmountable academic problems. Usually the blame for these problems fell on the "home." Parental involvement was perceived to be the casualty of the "broken home" or the two-income family. Most principals took a sense of pride from being strict disciplinarians, and in fact, there were few incidents of destruction of property, theft, or fights at the "middle-class" schools, while fights were routine at the two predominantly lower-class schools in Valley City.

The principals perceived that they had multiple roles: discipline, curriculum leadership, supervision, liaison between the district and the school and the school and community. Nevertheless, in neither study did principals prepare their staffs for the desegregation effort, nor did they supervise teachers to assess whether problems were brewing. The reactive orientation of the principals, like those of district administrators, is not optimal for the implementation of educational innovations of the scope of desegregation.

VI. Conclusion

Administrators in the two districts studied share many common problems and adaptive strategies. Both systems served conservative communities and had exhausted all legal alternatives to court mandated desegregation save voluntary busing. Both districts spoke the language of "educational quality," "options," and "specialized schools" in defusing the polarization of their community and achieving peaceful participation. Playing the numbers game of student transfers, they chose cosmetic compliance as a first step. Valley City has been totally able to restructure the nature of its staff development, and greatly remedy the isolation of minority students while improving its educational offerings. Vista Grande began more modestly with only a token effort at desegregation with an eye toward waiting out the political battles that may relieve districts of responsibility for carrying out social change.

The desegregation movement is in many ways prototypical of the embattled social welfare and equity programs that are falling sway to popular legislative, and judicial retrenchment. In California, the court has recently handed down a ruling which upholds the constitutionality of the state referendum banning the use of mandatory busing for the purpose of reducing racial imbalance in the state's schools.

Districts may take a wait and see attitude. Vista Grande may dismantle its present meager efforts to await a court order which may never come. Part of the problem, other than community resistance and financial problems, is that there has not been sufficient follow-up on the effects of desegregation to demonstrate its value. Districts like Valley City can serve as an example of school systems which can make desegregation work for them, as well as address the problems of education inequity. The dynamics of how day-to-day operations

in the administration affected and, in turn, were affected by the introduction of system-wide innovation deserve closer ethnographic scrutiny to provide much needed documentation of successful organizational change.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for Administrative Interviews

I. Background Information

1. Number of years with district
2. Roles
3. Age
4. Education

II. Impressions of Work Situation

1. Please discuss the school finance situation in your district.
2. Is there a problem of declining enrollment?
3. Is the central office adequately staffed or understaffed?
4. How would you rate the degree of communication between parts of the district administration, e.g., staff development, program management.
5. How would you characterize the relationship between the district administration and site administrators? (Are you in constant contact, relative autonomy, regularly scheduled contact?)
6. Have the schools in the desegregation program asked for and/or received assistance from the district?

III. Desegregation

1. What has been the financial impact of the desegregation effort?
2. Has the desegregation program changed the day-to-day operation of the district administration?
3. What factors do you feel are most important in making the desegregation program a success?
4. What do you perceive to be the major challenges which remain to be addressed this year, and in the future?
5. Do you feel the district has the resources (manpower, finances, physical plants, materials) to accomplish these goals?
6. Has the district sought assistance, resources, etc., from the community, city, state, federal government, or other agencies?
7. Describe the response of the community to the desegregation effort. Was it more, or less, problematic than your expectations?
8. Based on your experience, what recommendations would you have for other administrators about planning and implementing desegregation?
9. What do you feel has been your greatest challenge or what has provided you with pride in personal accomplishment related to the desegregation effort?

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